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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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STEPS WHICH CAN BE TAKEN BY THE AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION
TO MAINTAIN UTILIZATION WITHIN THE PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF THE RANGE

The Range Conservation Program is a program operated primarily by committeemen elected by ranchmen and farmers. The provisions of the program are developed through county and community committeemen and by the ranchmen themselves within the limitations of existing legislation. Any major changes in the program must have substantial support and understanding on the part of the participating ranchmen if they are to be successful. This means that any major change in the program must be preceded by educational work and experiments or demonstrations. The conservation of private range land is dependent upon the cooperation of the users of these ranges and the program cannot progress faster than the ranchmen understand and recognize the problems involved and the methods of their solution.

From the inception of the range conservation program, the maintenance of a proper utilization of range land has been encouraged by the establishment of county grazing capacity limits and the determination for each ranch of an approved normal grazing capacity, and by the withholding of payment to cooperators in the program where the stand of grass has been decreased or the forest, tree growth, or watershed has been injured by overgrazing.

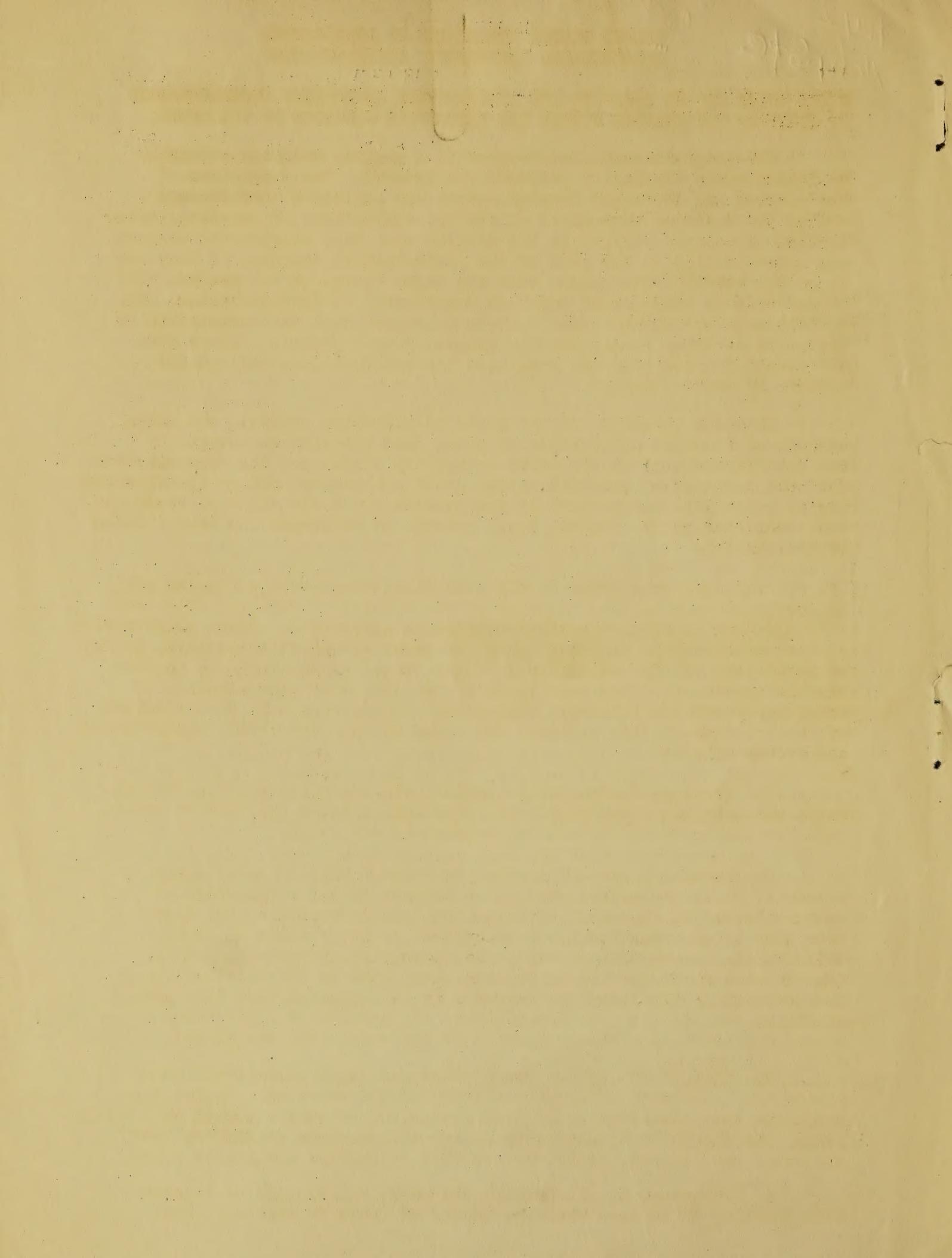
The major provisions of the 1941 Range Conservation Program will be developed at a national meeting of representative ranchmen from each of the States in which the range program is applicable. Since conservation of the range land is dependent upon the ranch operators themselves, it is proposed that further educational effort should be put forth to promote the utilization of range land in line with its productive capacity in accordance with the following suggestions to be brought to the attention of the ranchmen at this national AAA range meeting for their consideration and recommendation.

1. Insofar as practicable assist each ranch operator in developing a plan for his ranch which will take into account the factors necessary for the conservation and improvement of the range.

2. Under the present program no payment will be made to any person if it is determined that, with respect to any range which he owns or operates, the stand of grass has been decreased or the forest, tree growth, or watershed has been injured by overgrazing in 1940. While in many cases this provision has prevented overgrazing and in some cases has resulted in no payment being made to the operator, it has not been as effective as desired. It is suggested that this provision be revised for 1941 so as to reduce the payment at a graduated scale, depending upon the proportion of the range area overgrazed.

3. Through use of the range plans and other educational means stress the importance of proper stocking of the range as a device for obtaining more conservation and increasing income over a period of years. It should be clearly pointed out that maximum production from the range may, in many cases, be obtained by smaller numbers of stock.

4. Encourage by all practicable means the storage of reserve feed supplies to be used when the supply of grass is limited. Most



overgrazing is done immediately following or during periods of poor growing conditions. Stocking the range on the basis of average carrying capacity would, during periods of less available forage, naturally result in range deterioration. Therefore, a reasonable amount of reserve feed at such times could be used to protect the range. Consideration might be given to loans on hay or other roughages to be stored until grazing conditions require its use. The construction of storage space for reserve supplies of hay or other roughages should be encouraged.

5. Experimental range programs are in effect which have as their objective the determination of the practicability and best means of bringing about adjustment of livestock to the sustained yield capacity of the range. In Meagher County, Montana, the program has been operated to pay for grazing on a sustained yield basis rather than for deferred grazing. This practice has been checked primarily by observation of the range by the committeemen and range inspectors and by the use of check plots. It has been found necessary to leave the major part of the details of performance to the county committee due to the fact that proven methods of procedure and basic research data are not available for meeting the problems encountered. In Jones County, South Dakota, a similar program included, in addition, provisions for a three-year cumulative range-building goal. The results obtained in these counties will be studied and a report made to the range conference as to the results obtained up to that time. It is probable that some features will be found helpful in the development of the 1941 program.

6. It is fully recognized that range building practices such as water development, fencing, contour furrowing, and deferred grazing are in themselves not sufficient to obtain range conservation if the range is overstocked. Neither would the reduction of numbers for a particular year result in long time range conservation. Range building practices can materially increase the carrying capacity of the range and thereby contribute to the bringing together of the numbers of livestock and the carrying capacity. It is proposed that increased emphasis be given to the carrying out of practices which are most needed and which will contribute to long time conservation.

It is recognized that the conservation of the range is a continuous process and cannot be accomplished in a single year or period of years. It is dependent upon the operator's having a proper conception of what constitutes good range management together with such aid as the program can furnish in carrying out those practices which are needed for conservation. With the changes indicated above, it is believed that the Range Conservation Program will more nearly accomplish these objectives than would be possible in any other way with the available funds.

/s/ F. R. Merrifield
Southern Division

/s/ I. W. Duggan
Director, Southern Division

/s/ R. M. Evans
Administrator

/s/ Geo. E. Weaver
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/s/ N. E. Dodd
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/s/ T. B. Walker
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/s/ Harry N. Schooler
Director, North Central Division

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